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SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

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SUBJECT: USUNESCO GUIDANCE REQUEST: NEW INFORMATION
ON POSSIBLE IPDC BUREAU CANDIDATES

1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND GUIDANCE REQUEST: Mission has obtained new information on possible Dutch and Greek candidacies for the International Program for the Development of Communication Bureau (IPDC). Mission has learned that although the Dutch have given 2 million USD to the program over the past twenty-five years, none of it was donated in recent years. Mission has also learned that Greece is interested in running for the Bureau. They have given \$78,882 to the IPDC over the past 25 years. In light of this information and the Secretary's emphasis on Transformational Diplomacy, Mission requests guidance from IO/UNESCO on whether to reconsider running for the IPDC Bureau. Mission outlines four possible courses of action below. END SUMMARY AND GUIDANCE REQUEST.

DUTCH NOT RECENT DONORS

2. (SBU) Mission has obtained new information about The Netherlands possible IPDC Bureau candidacy. Mission has learned that the Netherlands, a historically significant contributor to the IPDC, has not made any donations in recent years. Mission has learned that the Netherlands has now asked their National Commission to form a committee to see how they might be able to identify resources and possible funding for the IPDC in order to explore options.

POSSIBLE GREEK CANDIDACY

3. (SBU) In the meantime, Mission has learned that the Greek delegation to UNESCO is considering a run for the IPDC Bureau. (COMMENT: The Greek Ambassador to UNESCO is a former journalist, which may explain their interest in this small but worthy program. END COMMENT.) Mission notes that the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), an outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Tunis Agenda, will be held in Athens this fall and that Greece has indicated an interest in hosting the IGF secretariat on a permanent basis.

AN EU EDGE IN THE COMMUNICATION SECTOR?

4. (SBU) Mission observes that if either the Netherlands or Greece represents Group One at the IPDC, it would give the EU countries an even stronger voice in the area of Communication and Information at UNESCO. France already chairs the Information for All Program, which is the other main program in UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector.

VALUE OF THE IPDC FOR DEMOCRACY BUILDING

5. (SBU) Mission recommends increasing USG involvement with the IPDC because it is an ideal means to advance the Secretary's Transformational Diplomacy agenda by developing independent media worldwide. IPDC projects require relatively small sums for local initiatives using radio, television and the Internet to succeed. One example is "the Voice of Afghan Women" a women's community radio project to which the USG donated 60,000USD through the IPDC in FY05. The program was so successful that the women now have a TV station to reach an even wider audience. Mission believes that this example, among many others, demonstrates how the IPDC can be an excellent vehicle for strengthening active participation in civil society, especially by women. It also compliments USG initiatives on education for democracy.

FOUR POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

¶6. (SBU) Mission outlines four possible courses of action for Washington to consider:

¶1. Mission remains on the IPDC Council, does not run for the Bureau, and does not designate ICSECA funds for the IPDC.

¶2. Mission remains on the Council, does not run for the Bureau, but designates some ICSECA funds to the IPDC.

¶3. Mission remains on the Council, does not run for the Bureau, and supports either The Netherlands or Greece for the Bureau.

¶4. Mission runs for the IPDC Bureau, and Washington commits to designating some ICSECA funds to the IPDC.

Oliver